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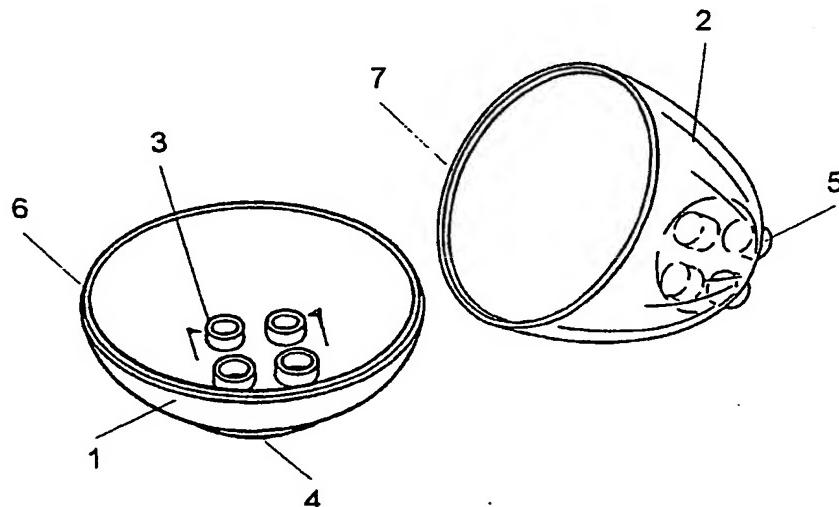
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(54) Title: TOY CONTAINER WITH COUPLING MEANS ON THE INSIDE



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(57) Abstract: A container for a toy building set comprising toy building elements (8, 10), said container comprising a bottom part (1) and a lid part (2) that can be interconnected whereby a cavity is formed between the bottom part (1) and the lid part (2). The bottom part (1) is provided with upwardly extending side walls, and the container is fully closed when the bottom part (1) and the lid part (2) are interconnected. The container is provided with coupling means on its inside, said coupling means being complementary with the coupling means of the toy building elements (8, 10).



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## TOY CONTAINER WITH COUPLING MEANS ON THE INSIDE

The invention relates to a container for a toy building set as featured in the introductory part of claim 1.

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Today, various containers for toy building sets are known. The containers are provided with upwardly extending side walls and are fully closed when the lid and the bottom are interconnected in order to achieve safe transportation of the toy building set both when the lid is mounted on the bottom and when the bottom is used alone.

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Some containers of this type are provided with coupling means to allow the containers to be interconnected with the toy building elements and thus be part of the game. The known containers are provided with coupling means on the outside of the lid and/or the bottom, and therefore the lid or the bottom typically serve as building support or building plate in the game. Such containers are known eg from US patent No. 4 822 314, US patent No. 5 035 324 and US patent No. 5 188 221.

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The toy building elements in these prior art toy building sets are stored in bulk in the container and are not interconnected to form structures until they have been discharged from the containers. However, in such cases there is a need to present the toy building elements in an organised manner in the container, and this is typically accomplished by providing the container with various inserts of eg carton, said inserts more or less rigidly securing toy building elements in specific positions.

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It is the object of the invention to provide a fully closed container of the kind described above whereby it is possible to present toy building elements in an organised manner without use of inserts.

This is obtained by configuring the container in accordance with the disclosures of the characterising part of claim 1.

5 This makes it possible to build structures directly on the container interior without use of various carton inserts. Moreover the coupling force between the coupling means thus provided and the coupling means of the toy building elements can be so tight that structures, if  
10 any, that have been built within the container are secured even in case the container is exposed to shaking and impacts.

According to a preferred embodiment the coupling means  
15 are provided on the bottom part such that structures built, if any, protrude from the bottom; and according to a particularly preferred embodiment the coupling means are in the shape of cylindrical coupling studs which is in accordance with the coupling means found in commonly  
20 available prior art toy building sets.

When the coupling means are arranged on the bottom part, the lid part is particularly advantageously made of a transparent material. Hereby it is accomplished that the  
25 transparent lid part allows a clear view of the structure built, albeit positioned within the container.

According to a particularly preferred embodiment the container is shaped like an egg and is provided with coupling means on the outside of the bottom part as well as on the outside of the lid part. The egg-shape imparts an interesting appearance to the container and the provision of coupling means on the outsides of the bottom part as well as the lid part means that the container may constitute an actual toy building element in combination with  
35 the remaining building elements.

The invention will now be explained in further detail with reference to the drawings, wherein

5 Figure 1 shows a preferred embodiment of a container according to the invention;

Figure 2 shows the same container as shown in Figure 1, but wherein toy building elements are arranged in the  
10 container; and

Figure 3 is a bottom plan view of the bottom part of the container.

15 Figure 1 shows a container according to the invention in a preferred embodiment. The container comprises a bottom part 1 and a lid part 2 which, when assembled, form an egg-shaped container (cf Figure 2). The bottom part 1 comprises upwardly extending side walls and is, on the  
20 inside, provided with coupling means in the form of four tubular coupling studs 3. These coupling studs 3 correspond to the coupling studs that are used in the toy building set that the container is to be used for. On the bottom part 1, a socket 4 is also provided which is pri-  
25 marily provided to enable the egg-shaped container to stand steadily. The socket 4 can also constitute a part of additional coupling means that are complementary with the coupling studs 3 whereby the container can be inter-  
30 connected with toy building elements with corresponding coupling studs 3 (cf Figure 3).

The lid part 2 of the container is, in the embodiment shown, made of a transparent material which means that the container, once assembled, will appear as a show case  
35 with a built structure within (cf Figure 2). The lid part 2 is provided with coupling studs 5 on the outside,

thereby enabling it to be interconnected with toy building elements with coupling means that are complementary thereto.

5 The edge of the bottom part 1 is provided with an annular collar 6, and the edge of the lid part 2 is provided with an annular groove 7 that matches the collar 6. Thus, the bottom part 1 and the lid part 2 can be joined by snapping in that the edge of the lid part 2 can be pressed  
10 down over the edge of the bottom part 1 until the collar 6 engages with the groove 7.

When the container is to be reopened, all it takes is to squeeze the lid part 2 slightly whereby it is slightly  
15 deformed, which means that the engagement between the collar 6 and the groove 7 is released.

Figure 2 shows the container shown in Figure 1 in its closed state where the bottom part 1 and the lid part 2 are coupled. On the coupling studs 3 of the bottom part 20 1, a toy building element is provided in the form of a box-shaped building block 8 with coupling studs in the bottom that are complementary with the coupling studs 3. On the top face of the building block 8, other coupling  
25 means 9 are provided that correspond to the coupling studs 3 on the bottom part 1; and a second toy building element in the form of a toy figure 10 is arranged on top of the building block 8.

30 In this configuration with a transparent lid part 2, the container serves as a show case or a sales packaging for the toy building elements 8,10 located within the container. As opposed to prior art sales packagings, the container according to the invention allows for the construction directly on the container bottom within the  
35 container without use of miscellaneous carton inserts.

With the container according to the invention, it is thus possible to present toy building elements 8,10 in an entirely new manner.

- 5 In a preferred embodiment, the socket 4 constitutes a part of further coupling means on the outside of the bottom part 1. These coupling means are shown in detail in Figure 3 that illustrates the bottom part 1 in a preferred embodiment seen in a bottom perspective view. The
  - 10 socket 4 is configured as an annular ring that fits exactly around four coupling studs corresponding to the coupling studs 3 on the inside of the bottom part 1. To accomplish further stabilisation of the container when it is coupled onto another toy building element, an internal
  - 15 annular part 11 is arranged concentrically with the socket 4. This internal annular part 11 fits into the space between four coupling studs corresponding to the coupling studs 3.
- 
- 20 The container according to the invention has been described with reference to a preferred embodiment. However, the container may assume many other configurations than the one shown in the drawings and described above without departing from the idea behind the invention. For
  - 25 instance, the lid part as well as the bottom part can be made of a non-transparent material, whereby the egg-shaped container is allowed to serve as a surprise-egg. The container may also have other configurations than that of an egg; thus, it may be box-shaped, and the
  - 30 height of the side walls of the bottom part as well as the lid part can be varied.

The coupling means on the internal bottom of the bottom part are furthermore described as being in the form of upwardly extending coupling studs. Other coupling studs are also feasible within the framework of this invention,

the only requirement being that they are complementary with the coupling means of the toy building elements. They may also be located in other ways than the one shown in the drawings in which they are placed at the bottom proper of the bottom part. For instance, the coupling means can be arranged on the side walls, or coupling means may be provided on both the side walls and the bottom proper.

C l a i m s

1. A container for a toy building set comprising toy building elements (8,10), said container comprising a bottom part (1) and a lid part (2) that can be interconnected whereby a cavity is formed between the bottom part (1) and the lid part (2), said bottom part (1) being provided with upwardly extending side walls, and said container being fully closed when the bottom (1) part and the lid part (2) are interconnected, characterized in that container is provided with coupling means on its inside, said coupling means being complementary with the coupling means of the toy building elements (8,10).
- 15 2. A container according to claim 1, characterized in that the coupling means are provided on the bottom part (1).
- 20 3. A container according to claim 1 or 2, characterized in that the coupling means are provided on the bottom proper of the bottom part (1), and that they are in the shape of cylindrical coupling studs (3).
- 25 4. A container according to any one of claims 1-3, characterized in that the lid part (2) is made of a transparent material.
- 30 5. A container according to any one of claims 1-4, characterized in that the container has the shape of an egg.
- 35 6. A container according to any one of claims 1-5, characterized in that the bottom part (1) also has coupling means on the outside.

7. A container according to any one of claims 1-6, characterized in that the lid part (2) has coupling means on the outside.

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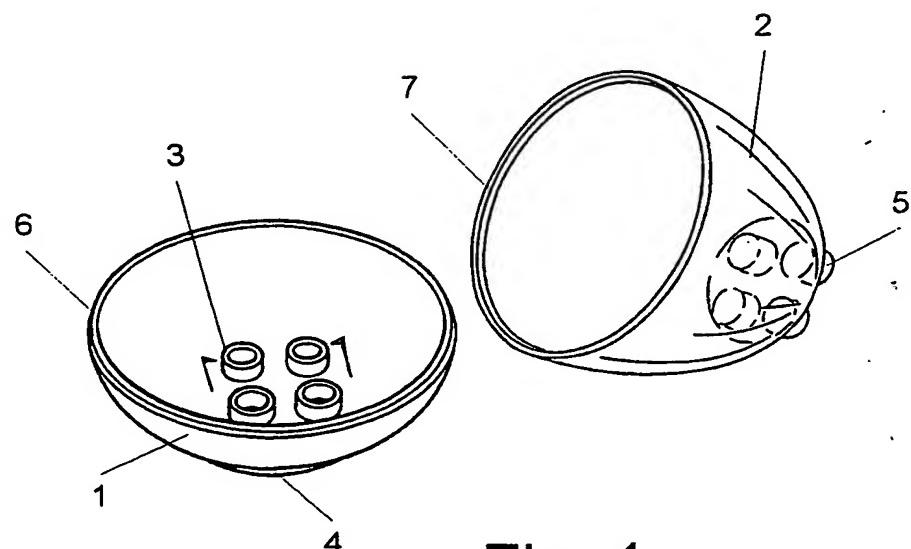
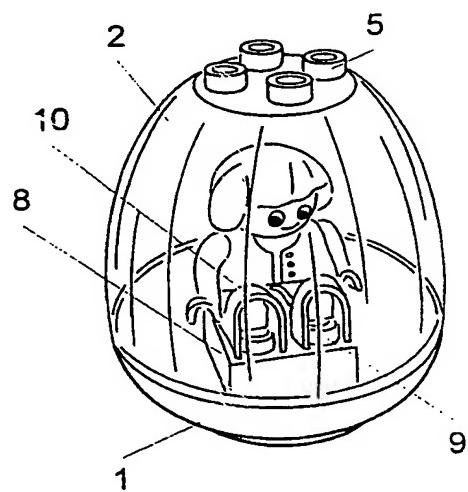


Fig. 1



# INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

Intern'l Application No
PCT/DK 00/00488

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)		Publication date
WO 9108032	A 13-06-1991	DK AU AU DE DE EP ES JP JP KR US	601689 A 642180 B 6747390 A 69013005 D 69013005 T 0502898 A 2060206 T 2997049 B 5501512 T 154546 B 5380232 A	30-05-1991 14-10-1993 26-06-1991 03-11-1994 11-05-1995 16-09-1992 16-11-1994 11-01-2000 25-03-1993 01-12-1998 10-01-1995
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**A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER**  
IPC 7 A63H33/04 B65D81/36

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

**B. FIELDS SEARCHED**

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)  
IPC 7 A63H B65D

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

**C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT**

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	WO 91 08032 A (BERGGREEN) 13 June 1991 (1991-06-13) page 3, line 27 -page 4, line 10; figure 6 ---	1-3, 7
A	WO 99 43574 A (NESTLE) 2 September 1999 (1999-09-02) the whole document ---	1, 7
A	GB 2 010 221 A (VACAKIS) 27 June 1979 (1979-06-27) the whole document ---	1, 4, 5
A	US 4 103 774 A (SHINGYOUCHI) 1 August 1978 (1978-08-01) the whole document -----	1, 4, 6, 7



Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.



Patent family members are listed in annex.

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